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REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are pending.

I. Information Disclosure Statement

Applicant notes the errors identified by the Examiner in the Information Disclosure Statement filed on July 30, 2003. Thus, in order to have the correct references officially considered, Applicant herewith submits a new Information Disclosure Statement.

II. 35 USC § 102

Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by WO 02/33463. The Office Action asserts this reference teaches each feature recited by the rejected claims. In light of the amendments above, and the remarks which follow, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicant notes WO '463 relates to an optical collimator, which, by definition, causes the light rays passing therethrough, to become parallel. In contrast, the present claims have been amended to emphasize that the optical pattern projected at the target has an even illumination pattern. This feature is supported by the originally filed claims (preamble) and throughout the specification, for example at paragraphs [0008] and [0011]. Thus, since there is neither a teaching nor suggestion in the cited sections of the reference that such a collimator causes an even illumination pattern at a target, Applicant respectfully submits that WO '463 does not expressly anticipate the present claims.

Claims 2-5 distinguish over WO '463 at least as does base claim 1. Even if the diffractive optical pattern of Figure 4 of the reference is formed from etching, molding and/or cutting and is "one of a binary or multi-level diffractive pattern or is continuous," there is no indication that such a diffractive pattern would produce an even illumination pattern.

Thus, claims 1-5 are not anticipated by the reference.

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Further, as this reference, alone, contains no teaching or suggestion to modify the diffractive optical pattern of the end of an optical fiber, Applicant respectfully submits that this reference, alone, does not render the present claims obvious.

III. 35 USC § 103A. Claim 6

Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over WO '463 in view of Tranchita et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,973,730). The Office Action asserts WO '463 teaches each feature of the claim, except for the optical fiber being coupled to a laser diode at the input end.

However, even if Tranchita et al. teaches an optical fiber coupled to a laser diode at the output end, Applicant respectfully submits that the combination fails to teach each or suggest each feature recited by the rejected claim. Specifically, as discussed above, WO '463 neither teaches or suggests to select an optical diffraction pattern to produce an even illumination pattern projected at the target. Accordingly, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

B. Claims 7-14

Claims 7-14 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Tranchita et al. in view of WO '463. Claim 7, from which claims 8-14 depend, has been amended to recite the illumination pattern is even. Again, this feature is supported by the originally filed claims (preamble) and throughout the specification, for example at paragraphs [0008] and [0011].

Thus, as discussed above, because neither of these references teaches or suggests to modify the diffraction pattern of the exit end of the optical fiber to achieve an even illumination pattern at the target, Applicant respectfully presents that claims 7-14 are allowable over the cited references.

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III. New Claims

New claims 15 and 16 depend from claims 7 and 1, respectively, and recite the optical fiber is a multimode fiber, i.e., can support more than one propagating mode, as is commonly known in the art. This feature is supported throughout the specification, for example at Fig. 1. As WO '463 relates solely to monomode fibers, and does not discuss or mention the applicability of the optical collimator disclosed therein for multimode fibers, Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 15 and 16 are allowable over this reference, alone, or in combination with Tranchita et al.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that all objections and rejections are overcome. Thus, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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1/31/05

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